



BOARD MEETING
Wednesday 15th February 2023
House of Sport, Belfast at 9.30am

BOARD MINUTE

Present

George Lucas
 Jay Colville
 Kieran Harding
 Gavin Boyd
 Wendy Elliott
 Alison Nicholl
 Richard Bullick

In Attendance

Antoinette McKeown, Chief Executive
 Rebecca Morgan, Chief Operating Officer
 Richard Archibald, Director of Sport
 John Hart, Head of Policy and Innovation
 Orlagh Watters, Head of Sports Systems
 Laura Carland, Board Secretariat

	ITEM	STATUS
1	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from Denise Burns and Kyle Ferguson.	
2	Declaration of Conflicts of Interest	
	There were no declarations of conflicts of interest to note.	
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting 13th December 2022	
	The minutes of the previous meeting (13 th December 2022) were accepted and approved. Approval: The minutes of the previous meeting (13th December) were approved.	Approval: The minutes of the previous meeting (13 th December) were approved.
4	Matters Arising	
	Nothing by exception	
5	Chair's Agenda	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Members and the ELT to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the organisation continues to engage with governing bodies and key stakeholders across the sporting sector and on behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked staff for their ongoing efforts.</p> <p>Members were reminded that following receipt of their invitations to attend the SportMaker Awards on 14th March in Titanic Belfast, that those Members who wish to attend can register via their invitation email directly.</p> <p>The Chair advised that a draft response to the Permanent Secretary on Raising Concerns / Whistleblowing is in development and will be submitted w/c 13th February 2023.</p> <p>The Chair referred Members to the McBride Sub-Committee information and asked where Members believed an update on McBride should be tabled on the Board Agenda. The Chair proposed that McBride Sub-Committee information be tabled under ARAC. The CEO sought clarification on recording McBride decisions to ARAC as decisions are taken by a sub-committee of the full Board and are fully recorded and on DecisionTime. The Chair indicated a desire to record the McBride Sub-Committee work somewhere within a formal Board</p>	

	<p>agenda. The Chair also suggested a review of the McBride Sub-Committee processes and functions. The Vice Chair advised that DoF hope to have a resolution to the McBride judgement by the end of the 2023/24 business year.</p> <p>In addition, it was noted that several Board Members are still experiencing technical IT issues which staff will follow up again.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>Members were referred to the CEO Report which was tabled as read.</p> <p>The CEO spoke briefly to the CEO Report.</p> <p>Members and the ELT referred to ongoing partnership work with DfC colleagues and the links between the Sport NI strategic plan and DfC's Active Living Strategy Members were advised that the current working relationship with DfC colleagues is very positive and that Sport NI and DfC continue to collaborate on the Active Living Strategy.</p> <p>The DOS provided an overview of engagement with key stakeholders to date.</p> <p>The CEO also reported on the positive progress with the Infrastructure Team's capacity to spend additional capital monies in Quarter 4. This had been a recommendation from the previous PAR Report and it is being met soon after restructuring. Members discussed monitoring rounds approval of easements and funding bids and decision-making processes. The CEO confirmed that the declaration of easements or decisions confirmed that the original business case for capital expenditure was approved by Board. In respect of a Digital Hub easement, the organisation provided an addendum business case to DfC for approval and DfC colleagues advised that their clearance was not required.</p> <p>Action: Decision-making processes on easements and additional bids will be provided to Members for their information.</p> <p>The CEO provided an overview of the organisation's engagement to date with Ulster Rugby in relation to Levelling Up funding and commented on the positive development of Governing Bodies seeking funding from a range of sources.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Governing Bodies engagement has been viewed positively by the sector with a visible increase of Governing Bodies seeking meetings at CEO level. The DOS spoke to the sporting sector engagement to date.</p> <p>Members noted the communications report and were advised that a monthly e-zine was being developed. Members also discussed the importance of the Sport NI website in communicating to stakeholders.</p> <p>During discussion on the Sports System update paper, the ELT provided a brief overview to the current processes for oversight on financial and governance measures to funded bodies and the rationale for approaching investment in new ways which better support sports. The ELT also provided rationale on why there is not a rating system for sports in terms of organisational governance and performance. Members were advised that a full paper on sports system investment will be brought to the Board in March.</p> <p>Action: Board paper on Sport System Investment to be presented in March.</p>	<p>Action: Decision-making processes on easements and additional bids will be provided to Members for their information.</p> <p>Action: Board paper on Sport System Investment to be presented in March.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Operations Report</p> <p>Members were referred to the Operations Report, and its associated appendices, and this information was tabled as read.</p> <p>The COO advised that the Operations Report was subject to an update following the last ARAC Meeting (30th January 2023) in the interest of amending CIVICA report formatting and providing more user friendly information.</p> <p>The CEO advised that in respect of the Health and Safety Review, the consultant from Mabbett undertaking the review will be meeting with the DOS and COO to finalise any remaining clarifications, after which the CEO will meet with the consultant to discuss the final draft report. Members were advised that some moderate risks have been identified but overall a positive review is anticipated. The final report will be shared with the Board for their information.</p>	

Members were advised that the most recent recruitment exercise to appoint a Head of Digital Transformation has proved unsuccessful, however, a further recruitment exercise closes on Friday. Members noted the difficulties in recruiting to this post currently and contingency plans being considered.

In addition, the COO provided a brief overview of the ongoing work of the Staff Engagement Working Group which, to date, has actioned approx. 8 of 13 recommendations resulting from the Staff Engagement Survey initiated by external consultants, HeadsTogether.

Member, WE, left the meeting.

There were no other queries or issues to raise on the Operations Report.

The Vice Chair provided an overview of the last ARAC Meeting on 30/01/23; commenting that the committee are demonstrating a high level of scrutiny on the information being received. Members were advised that following discussions with NAO in respect of the outstanding Lottery accounts, qualification of the 2014-15 and 2015-16 Lottery accounts was discussed as a potential option for consideration. Members noted that the discussions made at ARAC are detailed within the Draft ARAC Minutes, included with the Board papers.

Members noted that in respect of the outstanding Lottery accounts, Sport NI staff, NIAO and NAO are still working to the proposed 2026 completion deadline. Members were asked to note that the organisation deems the 2026 deadline as unacceptable, and that significant progress has been made more recently on the outstanding lottery accounts.

Members noted that ARAC Members were briefed on 'teething problems' encountered to date in moving to the new CIVICA financial management system. The Vice Chair advised that ARAC are satisfied that the collaborative work between the organisation and NIAO is managing this process effectively.

In addition, the Vice Chair advised that ARAC considered the Governance Action Plan and received an update on Internal Audit progress, which is progressing well.

Members discussed references to outstanding Lottery accounts and qualification of accounts introduced at the ARAC meeting by the NAO representative. The Vice Chair confirmed that ARAC agreed that Finance staff continue to work through reconciliation with NIAO colleagues before any discussion on qualification is considered formally. Members also noted that qualification is a decision for NAO and submission of final accounts for certification is a decision for the Accounting Officer. Members agreed not to put a specific time limit on discussions with NIAO at this time. It was noted that a further update will be provided to March Board.

8 Business Plan

Members were referred to the Draft Business Plan for 2023-24, which was tabled as read.

The CEO spoke to the draft Business Plan, which builds on the previous draft taken to the December Board for consideration. The CEO advised Members that a meeting with the Chair and Member, KF, was held in January to ascertain a better understanding of the Business Plan in terms of outcomes based accountability and performance measures aligned to Active Living Strategy and Power of Sport.

Members queried the key metrics within the Business Plan and how the organisation intends to measure objectives, agree baseline figures and operate around the proposed timescales. In addition, Members queried the impact on resourcing and capacity, objectives that may be potentially outside the direct realm of control of the organisation e.g., Health and Safety at Sports Grounds. The Chair proposed that Sport NI Board Members could seek an invitation to attend Safety at Sports Grounds annual conference, hosted by DfC. Members noted that Sport NI aims to continue supporting Governing Bodies in data capture to obtain more robust and valuable knowledge of the sector.

Members discussed the complexities and difficulties associated with KPIs or outcome based accountability.

	<p>In addition, Members were advised that in the absence of an agreed budget, the delivery of the draft Business Plan 2023-24 will be impacted by the available funding and resources.</p> <p>The CEO thanked members for their feedback which will be reflected in the final draft Business Plan to be presented to Board in March before formal submission to DfC before 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Members were referred to the Q3 Business Plan Review which was tabled as read. Members requested that the definition of objective status gradings i.e., 'Green', 'In Progress' etc be subject to further clarification for the avoidance of doubt.</p>	
9.	Items by Exception	
	<p>Members were referred to the draft Menopause Policy which was submitted for review and approval.</p> <p>Members were content to approve the Sport NI Menopause Policy. Approval: Members approved the Sport NI Menopause Policy</p>	<p>Approval: Members approved the Sport NI Menopause Policy</p>
10	AOB	
	<p>Members queried the budgeting process and status of the budget for 2023-24. The COO advised that the organisation has not yet received a detailed update on this, however, staff are internally informally preparing in the case of a more restrictive budgetary scenario.</p> <p>Following the discussion regarding data and information from the sporting sector, OW, IHSS, clarified for Members that the organisation is awaiting receipt of the results of the Sporting System Survey as part of the investment process, however, the organisation is already in possession of substantial information on the sector. Current data requests will help firm up existing knowledge and evidence.</p> <p>The Chair queried if Members felt that the meeting was productive and advised that any comments or queries on Board proceedings would be welcome to help improve productivity. There were no additional questions or queries to raise.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the ELT and Board for the time and ongoing work for the organisation.</p>	
11	Date of the Next Meeting(s)	
	<p>Members noted that the next Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 8th March at 9.30am in House of Sport, Belfast.</p>	

Signed by Sport NI Chair: *George Lucas*

Date: 8th March 2023